MUCC
MICHIGAN UNITED CONSERVATION CLUBS
2101 Wood Street
Mail Address: P.O. Box 2235, Lansing, Michigan 48911
Phone (517) 371-1041

PRESIDENT
Daniel Robbins, 13200 Trist Rd., Grass Lake, Michigan 49240

VICE-PRESIDENTS
Ryan Bontekoe, Marion, Michigan 49665
Glenn Corbett, 20647 Country Club, Harper Woods, Michigan 48236
Glenn Geerlings, 9531 New Holland, Rt. #1, Zeeland, Michigan 49464

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
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REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENTS
Gerald Goodman, Rt. #1, Box 32, Iron River, Michigan 49935
Beatrice Inglis, Millersburg, Michigan 49759
Walter Dean, Box 235, Shepherd, Michigan 48883
Robert Slingerland, 3201 Lake George Rd., Lake Orion, Michigan 48035

TREASURER
Hale Pearce, 71 Edison Court, Coldwater, Michigan 49037

September 15, 1975

Mr. Bill Leonard
Vice President, News
Columbia Broadcasting System
324 West 57th Street
New York, New York 10019

Dear Mr. Leonard:

On behalf of the organized sportsmen of the State of Michigan, assembled under the banner of the Michigan United Conservation Clubs, we wish to formally ask your network for 90 minutes of prime time to rebut the slanderous attack on the nation's hunters as portrayed in your airing of the so-called documentary "Guns of Autumn."

Our organization was called upon by CBS to assist in filming this program. Being cognizant of the militant antihunting movement existing in the United States today, we were naturally cautious in making our determination to cooperate with you in this effort. Only after assurance by the producer, Mr. Drasnin, that the show would be used to promote hunting as a wholesome, recreational pursuit and in the best traditions of its American heritage, did we consent to cooperate.

I personally met with Mr. Drasnin in Escanaba, Michigan prior to the filming of one of the scenes from Michigan and conveyed to him and his associates the concern we had over the possibility that our cooperation might be used in an effort to degrade the sport of hunting. Again, we were assured that we had nothing to worry about.

Mr. Drasnin then proceeded to betray his word and to attempt to portray some 20 million members of the American hunting fraternity as illiterate boozing slobs.

I make no apologies for those members of the hunting fraternity who have

little or no concern for the sporting ethic; but I further submit that any time 20 million people are placed under a microscope, some of them will have characteristics which leave something to be desired.

Neither CBS nor Mr. Drasnin did anything to depict the quality hunting experience that the majority of sportsmen seek. They have done a great disservice to the future of wildlife management in North America, as it is primarily funded with hunters' money.

In the words of Mr. Nelson Bryant, writing in the Sunday, September 7 New York Times, "If one were planning to portray the glories of love between woman and man in a television documentary, then devoted the entire show to the antics of a drunken clown in a bordello, one would achieve the same level of truth realized in the CBS News 90-minute film "The Guns of Autumn."

In closing, we further note that CBS cautioned viewers of the program that certain scenes might be offensive to some people; we suggest you use the same standard of journalistic concern in giving advance warning for other programming which often includes brutality, violence and muder, all of which is repugnant to us.

Again, we repeat our request for equal time, preferably in the same time slot, to accurately portray the contributions of the American hunter to the American wildlife management scene, and the benefits derived from hunting as a recreational pursuit.

Sincerely yours,

Thomas L. Washington
Executive Director

TLW:mh

cc: Mr. Irv Drasnin